



## OCCUPATIONAL FATALITY INVESTIGATION AND PREVENTION

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- In 2002, more than 5,500 workers were fatally injured at work, an average of 15 a day.
- The direct costs of occupational injuries and illnesses were estimated to be \$45.8 billion in 2001 (2003 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index). The indirect costs were estimated to be an additional \$137.4 to \$229 billion.
- Although data used to track work-related injury deaths are useful for identifying groups at high risk and the general causes of these events, more in-depth information is frequently required to understand the circumstances of and contributors to fatal injuries in order to develop effective preventive measures.

### WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC operates the Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program, which conducts in-depth investigations of work-related fatalities. Risk factors are identified and strategies to prevent similar deaths are developed and disseminated. FACE investigations are conducted by CDC staff in 6 states and by local investigators in 15 states funded by CDC through cooperative agreements. In 2003, 87 new investigations were conducted that focused on: deaths of youth less than 18 years of age, deaths in roadway construction work zones, deaths involving machinery, and deaths of Hispanic workers. State FACE programs target additional areas for investigation based on the region's pattern of work injury deaths.

In 1998, a program was developed to address firefighter line-of-duty deaths across the country. The results of these investigations were disseminated nationally throughout the fire service industry. Fire departments are using these results to improve work practices and procedures at fire scenes and to improve equipment to prevent injuries and deaths. In 2003, 43 new investigations were conducted in 22 states.

#### *Example of Program in Action*

In 2003, New York Governor George Pataki implemented a law prohibiting the use of live fires in firefighter drills. The law resulted from the 2001 death of a firefighter. CDC's investigation of this incident was cited in the justification for this new law.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Fatality rates are decreasing in many industry sectors and occupational groups; however fatal injuries in the workplace still greatly affect the American workforce. FACE is a comprehensive worksite investigation providing strategies for more efficient worker injury prevention practices. FACE is now focusing on identifying risk factors and effective injury prevention strategies for high-risk occupational groups (e.g., adolescent workers, firefighters, Hispanic workers) and for persons working in unique hazardous environments (e.g., construction work zones).

*For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit [www.cdc.gov/program](http://www.cdc.gov/program)*

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